



Educational Resources 2013

Lesson Plans  
**Grades 7-8**



## Introduction

Welcome to the Regent Park Film Festival's school program. This resource accompanies the films presented as part of the Festival's program for grades 7-8. It provides you with a program synopsis, and simple lesson ideas for BEFORE, DURING and AFTER viewing the films at the Festival. We hope that you and your pupils have fun and enjoy learning with this resource!

### **Regent Park Film Festival School Program**

#### **Grades 7-8 films:**

Louder Than a Bomb

#### **Film Synopsis**

Louder Than a Bomb tells the story of four Chicago high school poetry teams as they prepare to compete in the world's largest youth slam. By turns hopeful and heartbreaking, the film captures the turbulent lives of these unforgettable kids, exploring the ways writing shapes their world, and vice versa.

## Grades 7-8

### BEFORE viewing

Louder Than A Bomb introduces the viewer into the world of poetry slam competitions. Many students may not be familiar with slam poetry and the tradition out of which it rose. Before viewing the film, teachers can familiarize their students with terms such as spoken word poetry, poetry jams and poetry slams.

#### **Spoken Word**

Spoken word is a type of oral poetry that was popularized in the 1950s and 60s with the rise of the Beat movement led by Alan Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs. It was also an integral part of the underground African American scene during the 60s with groups such as The Last Poets being credited with laying the foundation of hip-hop music. Spoken word poetry uses alliterated prose and occasionally metered verse to express social commentary. It is usually performed as a solo piece and it deals with issues of contemporary social relevance.

#### **Poetry Jams**

Poetry jams are informal performances that are the poetry equivalent of a jazz jam session. Improvisation and collaboration are its cornerstones and the poetry may or may not be original.

#### **Poetry Slams**

Poetry slams are competitions in which poets perform original work within a certain time limit (usually three minutes). They are given numeric scores by five judges who have been selected from the audience by the MC. Most of the poems take the form of social and political commentary. The first poetry slam was held in Chicago in November 1984 at the Get Me High Club. Marc Smith, a poet and construction worker is credited for establishing the first slam competition and it has grown exponentially, with slam competitions held in dozens of countries around the globe. Slams can be "open" or "invitational".

They can also revolve around particular themes (e.g. “nerd” or “speaking up”). Occasionally, Slams restrict themselves to underrepresented groups such as high school students or women.

### **Canadian Poetry Slam Scene**

Canada has a thriving slam scene across the country. Spoken Word Canada (SpoCan) is an organization of spoken word performers and organizers whose mission is to “nurture, develop and advance spoken word artists, the professional spoken word community and the art of spoken word in Canada” (source: <http://spokenwordcanada.com/about>). Every autumn, SpoCan produces a national gathering of spoken word poets at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word.

#### **Related Resources:**

Toronto Poetry Slam - <http://torontopoetryslam.com/>

BAM Youth Slam - <http://torontopoetryslam.com/bam-youth-slam>

Throw Poetry Collective - <http://www.throwcollective.com/>

Vancouver Poetry House - <http://www.vancouverpoetryhouse.com/vanslam/>

Canadian Festival of the Spoken Word - <http://cfsw.ca/>

## **DURING viewing**

**Film Critic Guide Activity:** Please refer to the following page for description

## **AFTER viewing**

1. Conduct a poetry jam in your classroom. Divide students into groups, assign them a topic (e.g. literacy, poverty) and have them prepare a three-minute performance piece for the rest of the class.
2. Have students watch some performances of Canadian slam poets (youtube has several). What are some of the themes that emerge in their poetry? Is it different from the topics covered by American slam poets? If so, how? (NB: some pieces on youtube contain strong language and themes, suitable only for senior high.)



## Grades 7-8 DURING viewing

Materials: Film Critic Guide (one for each student), clipboards, pencils

- 1. BEFORE going to the Film Festival**, introduce the concept of a film critic to students and let them know that as they watch the film, their purpose is to view the film as film critics. The Regent Park Film Festival would like their ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings on the film to inform them as they choose films for next year. Read the programmer's synopsis to them. The Film Critic guide can be completed at the film festival or afterwards back in the classroom.
- 2. Go over the Film Critic guide** before going to the screening
- 3. Model using one or two examples** with the class, personally rate a recent book or video all have listened to/watched. (If needed, have students do an example sharing their ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings on a particular book/video with a partner based on the questions in the guide.).
- 4.** Emphasize that these ideas are **individual's ideas**, thoughts, opinions and feelings (it is okay to have a different response from their friends).
- 5. At the end of the Film Festival**, the host may call on students to give their thoughts, feelings and opinions about the films. Alert your students to this possibility and encourage them to not only to give their ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings about each of the topics listed in the guide but also to explain their thinking.
- 6. Back at school, this discussion can be continued.** If time allows, have students write a summary report or a letter to the Regent Film Festival explaining their ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings on some/all of the films shown and make recommendations about the type of films that should be included in next year's selection. Continue this discussion back at school, using the **After Viewing Lesson**.



**LOUDER THAN A BOMB**



1. I would describe this film as \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. I liked the character of \_\_\_\_\_ the best in the movie. This is  
because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Would you recommend this film to your friends? Why? Or Why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_